

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 453 539

CS 217 549

TITLE Written Language Developmental Continuum: Second-Fifth Grades.

INSTITUTION North Carolina State Dept. of Public Instruction, Raleigh.

PUB DATE 2001-00-00

NOTE 9p.; For the preschool to second grade version, see CS 217 548.

AVAILABLE FROM North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 301 North Wilmington St., Raleigh, NC 27601-2825. Web site: <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us>; e-mail: rirwin@dpi.state.nc.us.

PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Audience Awareness; Child Behavior; *Child Development; *Childrens Writing; Elementary Education; Student Evaluation; Teacher Role; *Writing Achievement; *Writing Skills; *Written Language

IDENTIFIERS *Continuum Models; *North Carolina; Purpose (Composition)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this "Written Language Developmental Continuum" brochure for second through fifth grades is to provide helpful information for parents, teachers, and other adults as they work with young children to advance and refine written language (writing) competence. The brochure is intended to be a useful tool for assessing children's development along a continuum of written language growth as well as a source of information about the competencies/descriptors that children are expected to learn in second through fifth grades--the descriptors list specific behaviors that are typical of children's development at particular ages or grades. The brochure points out that writing skills develop and become more sophisticated as students use them for meaningful purposes and varied audiences. It lists the following: competencies and descriptors for second grade (7-8 years); competencies for third grade (9-10 years); competencies for fourth grade (9-10 years); and competencies for fifth grade (10-11 years). It also delineates the following writing purposes: instrumental, informative, personal, heuristic, regulatory, interactional, and aesthetic. (Contains 12 references.) (NKA)

Written Language Developmental Continuum

Second-Fifth Grades

ED 453 539

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Students need to be able to use
language appropriately for a
broad range of functions and
perceive the functions for which
others use language.

CS 217 549

Writing Developmental Coni

Second-Fifth Grades

"Learning to write well is important for all American students. Even though students have varied backgrounds and experiences, the expectation for high performance in writing applies to all." (NAEP) Encouraging written language in the classroom and at home is a process. It is not something that can be accomplished in a few months or even a year. Proficiency in written language requires time and patience to reap the desired harvest. Writing skills develop and become more sophisticated as students use them for meaningful purposes and varied audiences.

The purpose of the Written Language Developmental Continuum for second-fifth grade is to provide helpful information for parents, teachers, and other significant adults as they work with young children to advance and refine written language (writing) competence. This brochure is a useful tool for assessing children's development along a continuum of written language growth as well as a source of information about the competencies that children are expected to learn in second through fifth grades. The descriptors in the continuum list specific behaviors that are typical of children's development at particular ages or grades. The competencies list specific behaviors that children are expected to learn in second to fifth grades according to the 1999 *NC Standard Course of Study for English Language Arts*. To ensure that students are able to demonstrate the descriptors/ competencies, teachers must provide opportunities for writing and reflection across the curriculum. "Writing is a powerful instrument of thought. In the act of composing, writers learn about themselves and their world and communicate their insights to others. Writing confers the power to grow personally and to effect change in the world." (Commission on Composition, National Council for the Teachers of English)

Written Language Development

Second Grade 7-8 years

Competencies

- Begin to use formal language and/or literary language in place of oral language patterns, as appropriate.
- Use expanded vocabulary to generate synonyms for commonly over-used words to increase clarity of written and oral communication.
- Plan and make judgments about what to include in written products (e.g., narratives of personal experiences, creative stories, skits based on familiar stories and/or experiences).
- Compose first drafts using an appropriate writing process:
 - planning and drafting.
 - rereading for meaning.
 - revising to clarify and refine writing with guided discussion.
- Write structured, informative presentations and narratives when given help with organization.
- Spell correctly using:
 - previously studied words.
 - spelling patterns.
 - analysis of sounds to represent all the sounds in a word in one's own writing.
- Attend to spelling, mechanics, and format for final products in one's own writing.
- Use capitalization, punctuation, and paragraphs in own writing.
- Use the following parts of the sentence:
 - subject.
 - predicate.
 - modifier.
- Use editing to check and confirm correct use of conventions:
 - complete sentences.
 - correct word order in sentences.
- Use correctly in written products:
 - letter formation, lines, and spaces to create readable documents.
 - plural forms of commonly used nouns.
 - common, age-appropriate contractions.

Descriptors

- Expand use of prewriting strategies.
- Write for clear purpose/audience.
- Use substantive detail in writing.
- Check written work by reading aloud.
- Revise/edit to improve text content.
- Use a variety of sources for spelling (charts, peers, dictionaries, computer spell-check).
- Produce writing and artwork to reflect personal response.

Third Grade 8-9 years

Competencies

- Use oral and written language to:
 - present information in a sequenced, logical manner.
 - discuss.
 - share information and ideas.
 - recount or narrate.
 - answer open-ended questions.
 - report information on a topic.
 - explain own learning.
- Share written and oral products in a variety of ways (e.g., author's chair, book making, publications, discussions, presentations).
- Use planning strategies (with assistance) to generate topics and to organize ideas (e.g., drawing, mapping, discussing, listing).
- Identify (with assistance) the purpose, the audience, and the appropriate form for the oral or written task.
- Compose a draft that conveys major ideas and maintains focus on the topic by using preliminary plans.
- Compose a variety of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama selections using self-selected topics and forms (e.g., poems, simple narratives, short reports, learning logs, letters, notes, directions, instructions).
- Focus reflections and revision (with assistance) on target elements by:
 - clarifying ideas.
 - adding descriptive words and phrases.
 - sequencing events and ideas.
 - combining short, related sentences.
 - strengthening word choice.
- Produce work that follows the conventions of particular genres (e.g., personal narrative, short report, friendly letter, directions and instructions).
- Use correct capitalization (e.g., geographical place names, holidays, special events, titles) and punctuation (e.g., commas in greetings, dates, city and state; underlining book titles; periods after initials and abbreviated titles; apostrophes in contractions).
- Use correct subject/verb agreement.
- Demonstrate understanding by using a variety of complete sentences (declarative, imperative, interrogative, and exclamatory) in writing and speaking.
- Compose two or more paragraphs with:
 - topic sentences.
 - supporting details.
 - appropriate, logical sequence.
 - sufficient elaboration.
- Use a number of strategies for spelling (e.g., sound patterns, visual patterns, silent letters, less common letter groupings).
- Proofread own writing for spelling and correct most misspellings independently with reference to resources (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, word walls).
- Edit (with assistance) to use conventions of written language and format.
- Create readable documents with legible handwriting.

ental Continuum

Fourth Grade 9-10 years Competencies

- Use oral and written language to:
 - discuss.
 - interview.
 - solve problems.
 - make decisions.
- Make oral and written presentations using visual aids with an awareness of purpose and audience.
- Share self-selected texts from a variety of genres (e.g., poetry, letters, narratives, essays, presentations).
- Use planning strategies to generate topics and organize ideas (e.g., brainstorming, mapping, webbing, reading, discussion).
- Compose a draft that conveys major ideas and maintains focus on the topic with specific, relevant, supporting details by using preliminary plans.
- Compose a draft that conveys major ideas and maintains focus on the topic with specific, relevant, supporting details by using preliminary plans.
- Focus revision on a specific element such as:
 - word choice.
 - sequence of events and ideas.
 - transitional words.
 - sentence patterns.
- Produce work that follows the conventions of particular genres (e.g., personal and imaginative narrative, research reports, learning logs, letters-of-request, letters-of-complaint).
- Use technology as a tool to gather, organize, and present information.
- Use correct capitalization (e.g., names of languages, nationalities, musical compositions) and punctuation (e.g., commas in a series, commas in direct address, commas and quotation marks in dialogue, apostrophes in possessives).
- Demonstrate understanding in speaking and writing by appropriate usage of:
 - pronouns.
 - subject/verb agreement.
 - verb tense consistency.
 - subject consistency.
- Elaborate information and ideas in writing and speaking in using:
 - simple and compound sentences.
 - regular and irregular verbs.
 - adverbs.
 - prepositions.
 - coordinating conjunctions.
- Compose multiple paragraphs with:
 - topic sentences.
 - specific, relevant details.
 - logical progression and movement of ideas.
 - coherence.
 - elaboration.
 - concluding statement related to the topic.
- Use visual (orthography) meaning-based strategies as primary sources for correct spelling.
- Proofread and correct most misspellings independently with reference to resources (e.g., dictionaries, thesauri, glossaries, computer spell-checks, and other classroom sources).
- Use established criteria to edit for language conventions and format.
- Demonstrate evidence of language cohesion by:
 - logical sequence of fiction and nonfiction retells.
 - time order sequence of events.
 - sustaining conversations on a topic.
- Create readable documents through legible handwriting or word processing.

Fifth Grade 10-11 years Competencies

- Use oral and written language to:
 - formulate hypotheses.
 - evaluate information and ideas.
 - present and support arguments.
 - influence the thinking of others.
- Make oral and written presentations to inform or persuade selecting vocabulary for impact.
- Select a self-evaluated composition for publication and justify rationale for selection.
- Use a variety of preliminary strategies to plan and organize the writing and speaking task considering purpose, audience, and timeline.
- Compose a draft that elaborates on major ideas and adheres to the topic by using an appropriate organizational pattern that accomplishes the purpose of the writing task and effectively communicates its content.
- Compose a variety of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama using self-selected topic and format (e.g., poetry, research reports, news articles, letters-to-the editor, business letters).
- Focus revision on target elements by:
 - improving word choice.
 - rearranging text for clarity.
 - creating simple and/or complex sentences for clarity or impact.
 - developing a lead, characters, or mood.
- Produce work that follows the conventions of particular genres (e.g., clarification, essay, feature story, business letter).
- Use technology as a tool to enhance and/or publish a product.
- Consistently use correct capitalization (e.g., names of magazines, newspapers, organizations) and punctuation (e.g., colon to introduce a list, commas in apposition, commas used in compound sentences).
- Demonstrate understanding in speaking and writing by using:
 - troublesome verbs.
 - nominative, objective, and possessive pronouns.
- Elaborate information and ideas in speaking and writing by using:
 - prepositional phrases.
 - transitions.
 - coordinating and/or subordinating conjunctions.
- Determine the impact of word choice on written and spoken language.
- Spell most commonly used words accurately using a multi-strategy approach to the learning of new spellings.
- Proofread for accuracy of spelling using appropriate strategies to confirm spelling and to correct errors.
- Edit final product for grammar, language conventions, and format.
- Create readable documents through legible handwriting and word processing.

Functions of Written

People use written language for different purposes. Parents and teachers can use this chart to encourage students in their written language development.

	Instrumental	Informative	Personal
Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language to get what we want • Asserting personal rights/needs • Requesting an opinion • Incidental expressions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language to represent the world to others • Language to impart what one knows • Labeling, noting details • Noting incidents, sequences • Making generalizations • Comparing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language to develop and maintain one's own unique identity
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sign-up sheets • grocery lists • wish lists • planning lists • catalog orders • business letters • memorandums • proposals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • news articles • concept books • science books • recipes • directions • posters • maps • booklets • logs • journals • webs • research (K-W-L notes) • charts • brochures • instructions • graphs • surveys • tables • reports • family histories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • journals • diaries • autobiographies • eye witness accounts • trip logs • editorials

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Language

Heuristic

- Language to speculate and predict what will happen
- Noting cause/effect relationships
- Noting an event
- Drawing conclusions
- Requesting a reason
- Problem solving

Regulatory

- Language to control others and the world around us
- Requesting directions
- Requesting others' attention
- Controlling self

Interactional

- Language to establish and maintain relationships with others

Aesthetic

- Language for its own sake, to express imagination, to entertain

- question charts
- fantasy/science fiction
- tables
- hypotheses
- graphs
- surveys
- forecasts
- estimations
- cause/effect diagrams
- inquiry projects

- directions
- labels
- rules for games
- signs
- rules & regulations
- procedures
- advertisements

- notes
- greeting cards
- invitations
- personal letters
- jokes & riddles

- modern fiction tales
- plays/skits
- historical fiction tales
- fairy tales

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